

CONDENMED TO DEATH BY THE RUSSIANS

MELBOURNE (Australia)

Mykola Lebed still fights for his country

A UKRAINIAN, who has never given up fighting for the rights of his people since 1930, is visiting Australia to address Ukrainian nationals here.

Mr Mykola Lebed, secretary-general for foreign affairs of the Supreme Ukrainian Liberation Council, which today has its headquarters in New York. He has been sentenced to death by the Russians.

Today, the Council realises that any hope of organising insurrection in the Ukraine is futile, but believes that by fostering Ukrainian nationalism "by the methods of co-existence" it can defeat the program of Russification which is aimed at stamping out every vestige of Ukrainian language and culture.

Mykola Lebed was born in the Western Ukraine, and before he was 20 years old, he held a post in the leadership of the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN).

Imprisoned by Germans

In 1935, while travelling illegally to Germany, he fell into the hands of the Gestapo, which arrested him and extradited him to Poland.

In Warsaw he was sentenced to death, but the sentence was commuted to life imprisonment.

Until 1939 he was in the Polish maximum security prisons at Swietly Krzyz and Rawicz.

At the outbreak of the Second World War he managed to escape from a prison convoy.

By 1941 he had reached the position of deputy head of OUN, and was the acting leader of the underground

when the head of OUN, Stepan Bandera, went to a German prison.

Dead or alive

During this time, Lebed laid foundations for the conversion of the scattered Ukrainian resistance units into the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA), which fought on the Ukrainian territory both against the Nazis and the Communists.

Among his souvenirs of that period is a Gestapo poster, which bears his picture and states that he is to be captured dead or alive.

In 1943 Mr. Lebed was appointed to head the external affairs section of OUN and a year later, when the Supreme Ukrainian Liberation Council (SUVR) was formed to co-ordinate the entire Ukrainian independence struggle, he was made its secretary-general for foreign affairs.

Study of policy

From that time on he has worked as its chief representative in various countries of Central and Western Europe.

From 1949 he has lived in New York, where he is primarily engaged in the study of the Soviet Union and its nationality policy, with specific reference to Ukraine.

Mr. Lebed was married in 1938 in the Warsaw prison to Daria Hnatsivka, who

had also been imprisoned for her membership in OUN.

Mrs. Lebed, and the couple's only daughter, Sirona — now a graduate student at Columbia University — were inmates of the German concentration camp at Ravensbruck during World War II.

Still an underground

Today, while all attempts to promote physical resistance have been abandoned, the Ukrainians are carrying on the fight for national independence in the field of ideas.

It is not possible to send books and pamphlets into the Ukraine, but much is achieved by the use of couriers, and by a campaign of regular letter-writing.

Most of the letters are intercepted, but it is estimated that about six per cent. get through.

The campaign is having a decided effect and the "war of ideas" is even influencing members of the Communist Party.

The Ukrainian Communist Party has publicly expressed its concern at the situation.

Secret pamphlet

Mr. Lebed has brought to Australia with him the text of a clandestine pamphlet written in the Ukraine.

It was written on the occasion of the trial of a man

MYKOLA LEBED

The war of ideas

convicted of setting fire to the library in Kiev, last May.

It gives details of the virtually secret trial in a small court in the city of Kiev, and the testimonies of witnesses coached by the Soviet Security Police.

Authors of the unsigned pamphlet wrote that they could not put their names to it because "we live in a country where, for a word of truth, people are being criminally destroyed without trial."

Lawyers executed

They charge that "Russian chauvinism, like anti-Semitism, has been rehabilitated long ago in the colonial empire called the USSR," and refer to two other fires in the national libraries of Turkmenia and Uzbekistan.

The pamphlet also tells of the secret trial and execution, a few years ago, of a group of Kiev and Lviv lawyers, who wanted to bring before the Supreme Soviet and the United Nations the question of colonial oppression in the Ukraine.

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